

Message Text

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SUBJ: QUARTERLY REPORT ON GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

1. THE MINISTRY OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION HAS ISSUED A PERFORMANCE REPORT ON THE GOVERNMENT S ACTIVITIES DURING THE FIRST TWO QUARTERS OF 1978 (A SIMILAR REPORT ON THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE YEAR WAS NOT RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC). ALTHOUGH SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE WAS GENERALLY BELOW TARGETS, THE SECOND QUARTER WAS AN IMPROVEMENT OVER THE FIRST QUARTER.

2. THE REPORT (SIX COPIES OF WHICH ARE BEING POUCHED TO WASHINGTON) BRIEFLY OUTLINES THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OF THE SEVENTEEN MINISTRIES PLUS THE GREATER COLOMBO ECONOMIC COMMISSION (FREE TRADE ZONE BODY) AND COMPARES ACTUAL PERFORMANCE WITH TARGETS. IN TERMS OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, MANY MINISTRIES WERE 20 TO 50 PERCENT BELOW TARGET FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, ONLY THE MINISTRIES OF SHIPPING AND TOURISM AND OF FISHERIES MET OR EXCEEDED PERFORMANCE TARGETS. EXPENDITURES UNDER THE DECENTRALIZED BUDGET AMOUNTED TO 43.6 PERCENT OF THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED.

3. THE MINISTRY OF IRRIGATION, POWER AND HIGHWAYS REPORTED THAT WORK ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE MAHAWELI PROJECT GENERALLY FELL SHORT OF OVERALL TARGETS. SHORTAGES OF MACHINERY, EQUIPMENT, AND
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LABOR, AS WELL AS HARAD GROUND CONDITIONS, WERE GIVEN AS REASONS FOR THE SHORTFALL.

4. THE SECTION ON THE MINISTRY OF PLANTATION INDUSTRIES PROVIDES STATISTICS ON SRI LANKA S THREE MAJOR EXPORT PRODUCTS. TEA PRODUCTION IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1978 WAS DOWN 3.2 PERCENT FROM THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR EARLIER. WHILE RUPEE EXPORT EARNINGS

REGISTERED A LARGE INCREASE DUE TO THE NOVEMBER 1977 DEVALUATION, IN DOLLAR TERMS (USING AVERAGE EXCHANGE RATES FOR CONVERSION) EXPORT EARNINGS WERE DOWN 2.2 PERCENT. COMPARING THE SAME SIX-MONTH PERIODS, RUBBER OUTPUT ROSE 9.4 PERCENT AND DOLLAR EXPORT EARNINGS WERE UP 6.4 PERCENT. EXPORTS OF COCONUT OIL, DESICCATED COCONUT, AND COPRA ROSE SIGNIFICANTLY, WHILE SHIPMENTS OF COCONUT FIBER FELL. TOTAL EXPORT EARNINGS FROM COCONUT PRODUCTS INCREASED 28.6 PERCENT IN DOLLAR TERMS. THE MINISTRY OF TRADE'S FIGURES ON GEM EXPORTS INDICATE DOLLAR EARNINGS FELL 6.7 PERCENT (EMBASSY COMMENT: THE DECLINE IN GEM EARNINGS IS PROBABLY DUE TO ELIMINATION OF EXPORT INCENTIVE LAST YEAR, AND SOME GEM SHIPMENTS ARE NO DOUBT AGAIN MOVING IN ILLEGAL CHANNELS).

5. THE REPORT ALSO PROVIDES A BREAKDOWN OF FOREIGN AID (NOT INCLUDING FOOD AID) BY PROJECT, SOURCE, AND UTILIZATION. PROJECT AID UTILIZED IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR WAS APPROXIMATELY DLRS 27 MILLION, DLRS 21 MILLION OF WHICH WAS PROVIDED BY WEST GERMANY, THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, KUWAIT, AND INDIA FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A FERTILIZER FACTORY.

6. COMMENT: THE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT IS A LAUDABLE EFFORT TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS AND IS NOT DOING. EVERY THREE MONTHS, EACH MINISTRY WILL BE REQUIRED TO EXAMINE PUBLICALLY ITS OWN PERFORMANCE AND, HOPEFULLY, MAKE AN EFFORT TO CORRECT ITS SHORTCOMINGS. PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS HAVE GENERALLY TRIED TO MAKE PUBLIC ONLY THE SUCCESSES AND TO HIDE

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THE MANY FAILURES. THE QUARTERLY REPORT SHOULD KEEP PRESSURE ON INDIVIDUAL MINISTERIES TO MEET PERFORMANCE TARGETS.
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